

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

DAY OF SERVICE JANUARY 19, 2015

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE**



“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?”

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. devoted his life to equality, social justice, economic advancement, and opportunity for all. He challenged us to build a more perfect union and taught us that everyone has a role to play in making America what it ought to be.

By making service part of our daily lives, we can help realize Dr. King’s dream. Together, we can create and sustain opportunities for Americans to strengthen their own and other’s economic opportunity, ensure that more young people graduate from high school, support our military families and veterans, and help communities prepare for and recover from disaster. Together, we demonstrate what it means to be citizens.

What is the MLK Day of Service?

After a long struggle, legislation was signed in 1983 creating a federal holiday marking the birthday of Dr. King. Americans first observed the holiday in 1986. In 1994, Congress designated the holiday as a national day of service and charged the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) with leading this effort. Taking place each third Monday in January, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service is the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service – a “day on, not a day off.” This day of service empowers individuals, strengthens communities, bridges barriers, addresses social problems, and moves us closer to Dr. King’s vision of a “Beloved Community.”

Why Serve on MLK Day?

Dr. King recognized the power of service. He famously said, “Everyone can be great because everybody can serve.” Observing the Martin Luther King, Jr. federal holiday through service

is a way to begin each year with a commitment to make your community better. Your service honors Dr. King’s life and teachings and helps meet national challenges.

Service also brings people together of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. The MLK Day of Service encourages all types of service, particularly projects that have a lasting impact and connect participants to ongoing service. The most successful projects connect to the life and teaching of Dr. King, meet a pressing community need, and include time to reflect on his teachings.

We encourage organizations to join us in supporting and implementing projects that increase economic opportunities, improve education, support veterans and military families, and help communities prepare for and recover from disaster. We have several toolkits available at MLKDay.gov to help you plan these kinds of projects.

Recognize MLK Drum Majors for Service

MLK Day Drum Majors for Service are those volunteers who perform extraordinary everyday acts of service, but who seldom receive recognition. You can also recognize these outstanding volunteers with the Presidents Volunteer Service Award. Drum Major awardees will receive a pin, certificate of achievement, and a letter from the President of the United States. For more information visit MLKDay.gov/awards.

How Can I Continue to Serve After MLK Day?

Start by connecting your MLK Day activities to the work you are doing year-round. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service shines a spotlight on the great work that is already happening and kicks off a year of service, as part of the President's [United We Serve](#) Initiative. Where and how you serve is up to you – the important thing is to get involved. Visit MLKDay.gov to find a volunteer opportunity in your community and for ideas on planning your own project.

2014 Highlights

The 2014 MLK Day of Service inspired hundreds of thousands of Americans to come together to serve their community. Citizens in all 50 states delivered meals, refurbished schools and community centers, and collected food and clothing. Volunteers also recruited mentors, supported job-seekers, built homes and provided other services for veterans and military families, and helped citizens improve their financial literacy skills. Our nation's leaders including President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, cabinet secretaries, governors and mayors honored Dr. King's legacy through service projects addressing pressing community needs.

MLK Day of Service Leaders and Network

CNCS and The King Center lead the MLK Day of Service in partnership with numerous national nonprofit organizations, faith-based and community groups, state service commissions, and other government agencies. In addition, each year CNCS awards grants to organizations to develop and coordinate service projects on the MLK Day of Service. The grantees are HOPE *worldwide*, Points of Light, and Service for Peace.

For a complete list of organizations in the MLK Service Network, visit MLKDay.gov.

Other Resources

A wide variety of free MLK Day resources for individuals and organizations are available at MLKDay.gov.

These include:

- * Tool to register your MLK Day project
- * Tool to find a MLK Day project in your local area
- * Toolkits with step-by-step instructions for planning a project that will have lasting impact
- * Other Resources: project ideas, needs assessment, community partnerships, ideas for children, newsworthy projects
- * Webinars
- * Weekly updates

To register your 2015 MLK Day project, go to MLKDay.gov and click "register your project."

For More Information, visit MLKDay.gov or email MLKDay@cns.gov.